



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

ICE ARRESTS MEN WHO FORCED WOMEN TO WORK AS STRIPPERS

Ukrainian women were tricked into traveling to the U.S., then forced to work at strip club

DETROIT—Two Livonia, Mich. residents were arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents Tuesday for forcing at least four women from the Ukraine to work as exotic dancers at a strip club here.

According to the criminal complaint, Michail Aronov, 32, who is a citizen of Lithuania, and Aleksander Maksimenko, 25, a U.S. citizen, are suspected of recruiting women from the Ukraine to travel to the United States under the guise of working as waitresses here. Once the women arrived in the U.S., they were forced to work at “Cheetah’s” strip club.

The women were forced to work 12 hours per day, six days a week to pay off \$12,000 in travel expenses and another \$10,000 for identification documentation. The men took all of the money the women were paid by customers of the club as payment for these “expenses.” The complaint said two of the women had been forced to work since May. The other two were recruited as strippers overseas and arrived in the U.S. in September with their husbands. They have not seen or spoken to their husbands since their arrival in the United States.

The women were driven to their work from their apartment and back again. There was no telephone in their apartment. The complaint also states the women were intimidated, hit and threatened with death if they tried to leave.

ICE special agents also executed a search warrant at 20344 Ellen Dr. in Livonia and uncovered evidence substantiating the complaint, including financial documents, firearms and numerous knives hidden throughout the residence.

The U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan, has accepted the case for prosecution. Both men were arraigned Wednesday in the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan with charges pending for forced labor. The Livonia Police Department provided assistance in the investigation.

The investigation by ICE special agents is ongoing.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.